

# ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

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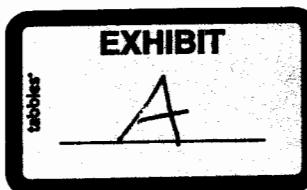
## POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND STANDARDS

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## INTRODUCTION

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The Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (“ACICS” or “Council”) supports the concept that periodic evaluation entered into voluntarily by institutions and their peers enhances the quality of the educational process and demonstrates that self-regulation of a profession is superior to outside regulation. This has been the philosophy of ACICS since 1912 when the first association of business schools was formed.

ACICS is incorporated as a non-profit education organization in the Commonwealth of Virginia and maintains offices in the District of Columbia. It has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education since 1956 as a national institutional accrediting body. The federal government, for purposes of distributing institutional and student financial funds, lists ACICS as an accrediting body on which it relies in determining the quality of education and training offered at institutions that ACICS accredits.

To help institutions and peer evaluators meet their responsibilities in conducting the process, ACICS developed and periodically has revised a set of policies, procedures, and standards governing the activity. Collectively, they comprise the *Accreditation Criteria* which, when complied with by institutions, results in the awarding of accreditation. This document incorporates all changes agreed to by the institutions since the last published edition, as well as organizational modifications.

Embodied in these criteria is the belief by ACICS that accredited institutions should at all times demonstrate a high standard of professional conduct involving educational practices and business ethics. Accreditation is not a regulatory process in the legal sense. The Council encourages not just conformity to standards but a continuous striving for excellence. Only those institutions that believe in this tenet should seek accreditation.

# **TITLE I GENERAL POLICIES**

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## **Chapter 1 AN OVERVIEW OF THE COUNCIL**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Accreditation is an independent appraisal of an institution during which the institution's overall educational quality (including outcomes), professional status among similar institutions, financial stability, and operational ethics are self-evaluated and judged by peers. It is a voluntary activity separate and distinct from business licensing, authority to award educational credentials, and eligibility to administer student financial assistance.

### **1-1-100—BYLAWS**

The Bylaws of the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (“ACICS” or “the Council”) are an integral part of the *Accreditation Criteria* and are incorporated herein by reference. The Bylaws are contained in Appendix A.

### **1-1-200—RECOGNITION**

ACICS is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (“the Department”) as a national institutional accrediting agency that is a reliable authority regarding the quality of education and training provided by the institutions that it accredits. Any proposed change in the policies, procedures, or accreditation criteria that might alter ACICS’s scope of recognition or ACICS’s compliance with the requirements for recognition by the Department will be submitted to the Department and other appropriate agencies.

The Department’s recognition provisions include certain operational requirements. Accordingly, the Council adopts the following statements regarding

ACICS and the manner in which it carries out its accreditation function:

- (a) The Council grants accreditation for an established period of time, as described more fully in these criteria. Prior to the expiration of the grant of accreditation, each institution must seek a new grant of accreditation. The Council maintains complete and accurate records for each accredited institution that cover the current and the prior periods of accreditation.
- (b) The Council conducts ongoing and comprehensive reviews of its accreditation criteria and its policies and procedures to ascertain their appropriateness and effectiveness. Proposed changes to the criteria or the Council’s policies and procedures may be initiated by the Council or submitted by member institutions or other interested parties, and substantive proposed changes approved by the Council will be circulated to member institutions, appropriate governmental agencies, and other interested parties for comment. The Council will consider all comments before it adopts any final changes.

### **1-1-300—PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Visitors to Council policy meetings will be seated as space permits. They should notify the Executive Director or the Chair of the Council in advance if they wish to address specific agenda items. Individuals may request that items be placed on the agenda by writing to the Executive Director at least 45 days before each meeting.

# TITLE I

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## Chapter 2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

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### INTRODUCTION

The Council fulfills an evaluative and accrediting function for a particular sector of postsecondary education. This function has been deemed appropriate by the U.S. Department of Education through the recognition of ACICS.

The mission of the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools is to advance educational excellence at independent, nonpublic career schools, colleges, and organizations in the United States and abroad. This is achieved through a deliberate and thorough accreditation process of quality assurance and enhancement as well as ethical business and educational practices.

### 1-2-100-MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for consideration for accreditation, an institution or entity must satisfy the following minimum requirements.

- (a) It shall be either an institution of postsecondary education (as herein defined) primarily offering certificates or diplomas and postsecondary institutions offering associate's, bachelor's, or master's degrees in programs designed to educate students for professional, technical, or occupational careers; or a noninstitutional entity offering professional enhancement education.

An institution is presumed to be an institution of postsecondary education if it (1) enrolls a majority of its students in one or more programs, the content of which is

on a postsecondary academic level and which leads to a postsecondary academic credential (such as a certificate, diploma, or degree) or an occupational objective; (2) enrolls students who possess a high school diploma or its equivalent, or who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance and demonstrate through valid assessment an ability to benefit from the educational experience; and (3) offers at least one program which is a minimum of 300 clock hours in length.

A noninstitutional entity must enroll a majority of its students in one or more programs, the content of which is on the postsecondary level or at a level which prepares the student for immediate enrollment into a postsecondary program. A noninstitutional entity is ineligible to participate in federal student aid programs or to award degrees.

- (b) It shall be legally organized; licensed by (1) the appropriate state education agency for postsecondary institutions or (2) the appropriate state agency for authorizing the conduct of business in that state for noninstitutional entities; and have offered its educational services to the general public for at least two years immediately prior to consideration of the application by ACICS.
- (c) Its mission shall be to offer educational programs which help students develop skills and competencies to enhance their careers.

- (d) Its residential enrollment and enrollment in each program shall be sufficient both to support course work and learning experiences that, separately or in combination, constitute measurable and defined educational programs, and to enable ACICS to assess the educational effectiveness of those programs.
- (e) It shall have a sufficient number of graduates from a majority of its programs to enable ACICS to assess the educational effectiveness of those programs. Programs offered at any credential level from which there are no graduates will be reviewed in accordance with Section 2-2-502.
- (f) It shall be in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- (g) It shall be organized as a corporation, as a limited partnership with a corporate general partner, or as a limited liability company.
- (h) Its evaluation for accreditation shall be authorized by the chief executive officer.
- (i) Its owners or managers shall not have been debarred by ACICS (See Section 2-3-1000).

# **TITLE I**

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## **Chapter 3 CLASSIFICATION OF CAMPUSES**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

ACICS is an institutional accrediting body that accredits entire institutions. It does not separately accredit individual campuses or programs. Therefore, all campuses must meet the standards established by the Council and must be evaluated accordingly.

#### **1-3-100—CLASSIFICATION OF CAMPUSES**

The Council classifies campus activities into three categories: main (including additional space—see Glossary definition), branch (including additional space), and learning site. Each classification has distinct characteristics, and the institution operating these facilities must comply with standards set forth by ACICS in Title III of this publication. A nonmain campus educational activity is one offered at any location away from a main campus. There is no separate accreditation for nonmain campus activities. The following nomenclature and characteristics are used by ACICS for classification and evaluation purposes.

**1-3-101. Main.** A main campus is the primary location of an institution to be accredited by ACICS. This campus is expected to meet fully all applicable standards set forth in the *Accreditation Criteria*.

**1-3-102. Branch.** A branch campus is any location of an institution other than the main, but under the same corporate structure as the main campus (i.e., part of the main campus corporation or a wholly owned subsidiary), that (1) is permanent in nature; (2) offers a full program leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized credential; and (3) is geographically separate from the main campus such that students

may not easily avail themselves of educational, financial aid, and administrative services of the main campus.

Institutions wishing to open a branch campus with a name different from the main campus must obtain prior Council approval. In addition, the catalog and other promotional material must include a statement of ownership that clearly identifies all branch campuses and learning site locations under the same corporate structure of the main campus. The catalog of the main campus must clearly identify the programs offered only at the branch. The branch may publish its own catalog. There shall not be management agreements, option agreements, or other contractual agreements between the owner of the institution and other parties with respect to the branch bearing on the present or future management and control of the branch.

A branch may offer programs and/or credentials different from those offered at the main campus. A branch should have a significant amount of responsibility for administrative control, academic affairs, and student and financial services to respond to student needs on a day-to-day basis.

**1-3-103. Learning Site.** A learning site is a location where educational activities are conducted which (1) may be permanent or temporary in nature, (2) offers courses or full programs of study, and (3) is geographically close to the main or branch campus that oversees the learning site such that students must utilize services provided at the main or branch campus.

## **TITLE II GENERAL PROCEDURES**

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### **Chapter 1 GAINING AND MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter outlines the steps that institutions must follow and the procedures utilized by ACICS leading to and following the award of accreditation status. Accreditation is a deliberate and thorough process and is entered into for purposes of quality assessment and institutional enhancement. When an institution applies for and receives a grant of accreditation, it is committing itself to operate in accordance with the standards and policies established by the Council throughout the term of the grant.

Inasmuch as accreditation is given for a specified period of time not to exceed eight years, ACICS uses the term "initial grant" to connote the first time an institution is accredited. The term "new grant" indicates a continuing status with ACICS after an institution has reapplied, has been reevaluated, and, in effect, has been reaccredited.

#### **2-1-100—ACCREDITATION WORKSHOP REQUIREMENTS**

The Council schedules accreditation workshops each year. Applicants for initial or new grants of accreditation are required to attend a workshop. During these workshops, Council representatives will consult with institutional representatives to help them understand and complete the process. Institutional representatives are required to attend an accreditation workshop within 18 months prior to the final submission of the self-study. For initial applicants, the chief on-site administrators of the main campus and all branch campuses are required to attend. For currently accredited institutions, the chief on-site administrators or the self-study coordinators of the main campus and all branch campuses are required to attend.

#### **2-1-200—INITIAL APPLICATION**

All communications concerning initiation of the accrediting process should be sent to the ACICS office. The accrediting process proceeds in distinct phases, each of which must be satisfactorily completed by the institution before the next can occur. Each phase must be authorized by the chief executive officer of the institution, who also can authorize voluntary withdrawal from the process at any time prior to final action by ACICS.

When considering whether to award an initial grant of accreditation to an institution, ACICS will take into consideration the actions of other recognized accrediting agencies that have denied accreditation to the institution, placed the institution on probationary status, or revoked the accreditation of the institution.

**2-1-201. Preliminary Review.** The institution must request in writing a preliminary review and receive a determination as to whether it is eligible to apply for accreditation. Such a preliminary review does not constitute an application.

To be eligible for accreditation, the institution must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Title I, Chapter 2. In addition, it must have graduated at least one class at each credential level it offers. Programs offered at any credential level from which there are no graduates will be reviewed as required in Section 2-2-502.

**2-1-202. Application.** The institution, after receiving a favorable preliminary review, shall submit a formal application for accreditation on forms supplied by ACICS. By submitting an application for an initial grant of accreditation, the institution agrees to be bound by the standards

contained herein, including the ACICS Bylaws contained in Appendix A.

The institution shall certify that the requirements covered in Title I, Chapter 2, "Eligibility Criteria" have been met. The application forms, eligibility certification, supporting documents required in the application form, and the nonrefundable application fee shall be submitted to ACICS.

Once an institution has been determined to be eligible for evaluation, filed a formal application, and remitted the application fee, the application is kept active for a period of one year.

**2-1-203. Resource Visit.** Following a determination by staff of the completeness of the application materials, a resource visit will be made to the institution, at the institution's expense, to determine if it is ready to begin the self-evaluation. A report of the resource visit will be made available to the school and to ACICS and will be used for advisory purposes only.

Initial applicants must submit audited financial statements certified by an independent certified public accountant for the institution's most recent fiscal year before a resource visit will be scheduled.

**2-1-204. Self-Evaluation.** Self-evaluation is the most important part of the accreditation process, requiring full involvement by administration, staff, and faculty. The Council publishes separate guidelines and materials to help institutions with the process.

**2-1-205. Scheduling the Visit.** Council staff will schedule dates for the visit. It is the responsibility of the institution to agree to dates for the visit when classes are in session, faculty is teaching, administrative staff is available, and other operations are functioning normally.

#### **2-1-300—NEW GRANT OF ACCREDITATION**

Before December 31 of the last year of the period for which accreditation has been granted, it is the

responsibility of the institution to file an application for a new grant of accreditation. The institution is invited to reapply 18 months prior to the expiration of an existing grant. The accreditation previously granted to an institution expires automatically with the passage of time unless extended by an action taken by ACICS. An extension of the previous grant cannot exceed one year, and not more than one extension may be given except for extraordinary circumstances over which the institution has no control. The Council, at its discretion, may direct an unannounced visit to occur at an institution about which it has received adverse information or when general operations of the institution may be called into question. Procedures for unannounced visits are described in Appendix B.

**2-1-301. Application.** The process of application for a new grant is the same as for initial accreditation except that institutions are not required to undergo another resource visit. Institutions that operate branch campuses and that are applying for new grants of accreditation will be required to submit a separate self-study for each branch campus. The Council will not consider an application for a new grant of accreditation unless all reports are current and all fees are paid. (See Sections 2-1-801, 2-1-802, and 2-1-804.)

**2-1-302. Withholding of Accreditation.** A decision by ACICS, based upon the application and evaluation for a new grant, not to award accreditation for a new period is considered to be the withholding of accreditation, not the withdrawal of the previous grant of accreditation. The previous grant expires automatically with the passage of time unless the Council affirmatively extends the previous grant while it is considering the new grant application. The Council always will give written reasons for withholding accreditation, and the matter, from that point, will be governed by procedures later described in Title II, Chapter 3, "Council Actions."

ACICS will not award a new grant of accreditation to an institution that is subject to an interim action by another recognized institutional

accrediting agency or a state agency that could lead to the suspension, revocation, or termination of that institution's accreditation or authority to provide postsecondary education. Further, a new grant of accreditation will not be awarded to an institution that has been notified by its state licensing agency of a threatened suspension, revocation, or termination by the state of the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education, and the due process rights required by the action have not been exhausted.

## **2-1-400—VISITING TEAMS, SELECTION AND COMPOSITION**

When an institution has submitted a satisfactory self-study and other required documentation, the office of the Executive Director will appoint a team to visit and evaluate the institution. The institution is notified of the composition of the visiting team and may request that team members be replaced for cause.

**2-1-401. Selection of Team Members.** Evaluators are selected from among educators, executives, and practitioners in business, administrative, and technical fields, and from state departments of education and other evaluation and approval bodies. The person designated as chair of the team always will be an experienced person who has responsibility for assuring that the visit is conducted fairly and thoroughly.

Appropriate state licensing and approval bodies are routinely notified of forthcoming visits and invited to participate in the visits as observers. They do not participate in team deliberations or in preparing the team report.

**2-1-402. Composition of Teams.** The size and qualifications of the team are determined at the discretion of the Council based on the size of the institution, the type and number of programs being offered, the mode of educational delivery, and other special circumstances. Teams conducting evaluations will consist of at least one person from another ACICS-accredited institution and at least one person who does not represent an ACICS-accredited institution, at a minimum. Additional team members will be named as

needed and at the Council's discretion based on the student enrollment and the credentials offered by the institution, or to serve as subject specialists to evaluate specialized programs. The Council makes a conscious effort to send visitors who have had experience in an institution offering and awarding similar academic credentials.

The application forms and the completed self-study will be supplied to members of the visiting team for review prior to the visit and for use during the visit.

**2-1-403. Staff Member on Visit.** A member of the ACICS staff accompanies teams on all visits. In the event that an ACICS staff member is unable to accompany a team on a visit, the use of a qualified contractor may be used as the ACICS staff representative on the visit. The ACICS staff representative is responsible for assuring that comparability is achieved from visit to visit and from institution to institution. The same ACICS staff representative who accompanies a team also is available when ACICS deliberates and may be asked questions about what was observed and reported by the team during the visit.

**2-1-404. Scope of Visit.** The scope of a visit will depend on the location, operation, size, and program offerings of the institution. All nonmain campuses are subject to evaluation, either in conjunction with the main campus or separately.

**2-1-405. Expenses.** Visit expenses for all team members, including the ACICS staff member who accompanies the team, shall be paid by the institution. Expenses include an honorarium to the chair of the team, to all outside representatives, and to subject specialists. The institution is required to submit a deposit prior to the visit, which will be applied toward the expenses of the visiting team. The Council reserves the right to cancel a scheduled visit in the absence of the required visit deposit.

## **2-1-500—TEAM FUNCTIONS AND PROCEDURES**

An institution is expected to be performing according to what it reported in its self-study and

to be in compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria* at the time of the visit.

**2-1-501. Functions.** The functions of the evaluation team are to verify information in the institution's self-study and to report all facts observed during the visit as to how the institution is accomplishing its stated mission, or failing to do so, in compliance with the criteria.

**2-1-502. Procedures.** Institutions are provided in advance with a checklist of materials and documents that should be current and readily available for review by the team. Prior to the visit, institutions are required to update the self-study where significant changes have occurred since its submission to ACICS.

During the visit, institutions are expected to make provisions for adequate consultation between team members and the faculty, administrative staff, and students. Some teams also may want to consult with the institution's board of directors or trustees and community leaders or employers.

The team prepares a written report that covers each area reviewed at the institution and includes other information pertinent to an accurate evaluation. The report subsequently is sent by the team chair to ACICS.

An exit conference is conducted at the conclusion of the visit and is attended by the chief executive or administrative officer of the institution and any others designated by the chief executive officer. During the session, the chair of the team will summarize the evaluation team's findings. Members of the team also may append to the report suggestions for institutional improvement, but such suggestions are not a part of the official team report later considered by ACICS. The visiting team does not make the accrediting decision.

## **2-1-600—POST-VISIT PROCEDURES**

After the evaluation visit, the following post-visit procedures and reviews occur.

**2-1-601. Opportunity to Respond.** The ACICS office sends a copy of the evaluation report to the chief on-site administrative officer, who is invited to respond to it in writing within the specified time frame.

**2-1-602. Intermediate Review.** All materials pertinent to an institution's accreditation are reviewed by experienced persons before being reviewed by the appropriate commission of ACICS. These materials include, but are not limited to, the institution's self-evaluation report, the visiting team report, the institution's response to the team report, financial records of the institution (which are not examined by the evaluation team), the institution's current catalog, and any official reports from state or federal regulatory bodies.

This group will make a recommendation to ACICS if the evaluation file is complete. If the file is not complete, the reviewers will organize facts for ACICS but will not make a specific recommendation. The Council has the option of postponing examination of files that are incomplete at the time of the intermediate review, even if subsequent information has been received by the time ACICS meets.

**2-1-603. Commission and Council Review.** All materials collected during the evaluation process are reviewed by the appropriate commission of ACICS, which will draft a recommended action for consideration by the Council. Only the Council can take a final accreditation action.

## **2-1-700—COUNCIL ACTIONS**

Action by ACICS to accredit or renew accreditation or not to do so, or to limit or otherwise condition the grant of accreditation, is determined only following review of the self-evaluation report prepared by the applicant institution, the report of the visiting team, the response of the institution to that report, the institution's financial condition, the recommendations (if any) of the interim reviewers, and a recommendation in the form of a proposed action from the appropriate commission

of ACICS. At each level of review, the number and seriousness of any deficiencies are taken into account, as well as the institution's indicated willingness and capability to overcome them. The Council may, at its discretion, direct an institution to submit a teach-out agreement, as described in Section 2-2-303 of the *Accreditation Criteria*. Specific Council actions are discussed in Title II, Chapter 3.

## **2-1-800—MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION**

An institution, by successfully completing the process, inherently agrees to keep ACICS fully informed of activities at the institution. The Council requires an annual report from each main and branch campus, where appropriate. Institutional changes that must be reported to ACICS are described in Chapter 2.

**2-1-801. Annual Institutional Report.** The Annual Institutional Report must be submitted on Council forms and be certified by the chief executive officer of the institution. It is due on or before September 15 annually. Failure to submit the Annual Institutional Report in a timely manner will result in the revocation of accreditation.

**2-1-802. Annual Financial Report.** The Annual Financial Report must be submitted on Council forms and be certified by an officer or stockholder of the corporation. It is due no more than 180 days after the end of the institution's fiscal year. Failure to submit the Annual Financial Report in a timely manner will result in the revocation of accreditation.

**2-1-803. Audited Financial Statements.** Audited financial statements, certified by an independent certified public accountant, are essential instruments in the determination by ACICS of an institution's financial stability. All institutions are required to submit audited financial statements within 180 days of the end of their fiscal year.

**2-1-804. Interim Report for Eight-Year Grants.** An Interim Report must be submitted by June 30 of the fourth year (mid-point) of an eight-year grant of accreditation. This report will undergo evaluation, and based upon a review of the

report, visit(s) may be required as determined by the Council.

**2-1-805. Payment of Fees.** Institutions are required to pay all annual sustaining fees, user fees, evaluation visit deposits and expenses, and other assessed costs by the established deadlines. Non-payment of any fees or expenses subjects a member to revocation of accreditation without a hearing. (See Article VII, Section 5 of the Bylaws [Appendix A]).

**2-1-806. Unannounced Visits.** The Council, at its discretion, may direct an unannounced visit to occur at an institution about which it has received adverse information or when general operations of the institution may be called into question. Procedures for unannounced visits are described in Appendix B.

**2-1-807. Denoting Accreditation.** Only after accreditation is granted by ACICS may an institution so denote its status in official publications or in advertising. The form of notice is prescribed by ACICS, and specific permissible language is set forth in Guidelines for Institutional Publications in Appendix C.

**2-1-808. Program Length and Tuition and Fees.** ACICS will determine average program lengths and tuition and fees annually based on information collected in the Annual Institutional Reports and will provide these data to all accredited institutions. Institutions with program lengths that are more than one standard deviation from the average will be required to submit an explanation for the deviation. If the Council does not accept the explanation, it may require a consultation between ACICS and the institution, direct an on-site evaluation, issue a show-cause directive, or withhold inclusion of the program from the institution's current grant of accreditation.

In assessing these relationships, the Council will consider institutional mission, program objectives and content, types and locations of instructional delivery, knowledge and skills necessary for students to reach competence, and additional requirements that may be placed upon a graduate

for employability, including, if applicable, certification or licensure.

**2-1-809. *Interim Financial Review.*** The Council may require an institution to furnish Quarterly Financial Reports, a Financial Improvement Plan, or interim narrative reports, or it may issue a show-cause directive to an institution due to the financial operation of the institution. Institutions that are required to prepare interim reports are considered to be on Financial Review and are subject to additional restrictions regarding the initiation of nonmain campuses.

**2-1-810. *Retention and Placement.*** ACICS will determine average retention and placement rates annually for institutions based on information collected in the Annual Institutional Reports and will provide these data to all accredited institutions. An institution with retention or placement rates that are not in keeping with the expectations of ACICS may require a consultation between ACICS and the institution, the submission of a corrective action plan, undergo an on-site evaluation, or be issued a show-cause directive, a deferral or denial action related to the institution's application for a new or initial grant of accreditation, or directed another appropriate action.

**2-1-811. *Student Loan Cohort Default Rates.*** The Council will monitor an institution's student loan cohort default rates. An institution may be subject to additional reports or actions if:

- (a) its most recent cohort default rate is 20% or greater; or
- (b) its default rate improvement plan failed to minimize student loan defaults adequately for those cohort years for which the plan was in effect.

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## **TITLE II**

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### **Chapter 2 INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

Approval by ACICS is required before substantive changes are implemented, and institutions should notify ACICS of other significant changes. The material in this chapter explains the evaluation procedures that ACICS will follow for approving substantive changes. The Council shall be notified immediately of substantive changes at an institution, including changes in its mission or objectives, management, ownership, control, educational programs, mode of delivery, name, geographic location, and state or local authority to operate.

#### **2-2-100-NONMAIN CAMPUSES**

**2-2-101. *Initiation of Nonmain Campus Activity.*** A nonmain campus activity includes any ongoing instructional activity offered at a site away from the main facility. Such activities are described in Section 1-3-100. Reporting requirements are as follows:

(a) *Branch Campus.* It is the responsibility of the institution to notify ACICS of the intention to initiate a branch campus before the branch begins classes. Activity must be initiated at the branch campus within one year of the proposed start date. A branch campus must be approved by the Council before advertising, recruiting, and enrollment may take place. Failure to notify ACICS prior to the initiation of a branch campus may call into question the accreditation of the main campus.

The institution shall provide, on Council forms, the rationale for initiation of the

branch and other information about the educational programs, credentials to be awarded, faculty, learning resources, physical and financial resources, strength in supporting fields, admission and graduation requirements, compliance with state law and authority to operate, number of students, and administrative arrangements. An acceptable catalog which identifies the branch campus also shall be included as part of the application.

The Council will monitor the number of branch applications submitted for each main campus and campuses under common ownership based on a demonstration of sound administrative and financial capabilities. The Council reserves the right to limit the number of branches based on its review of demonstrated administrative and financial capabilities.

(b) *Learning Site.* It is the responsibility of the institution to notify ACICS of any new learning site activity prior to initiation. Activity must be initiated at the learning site within one year of the proposed start date. A learning site must be approved by the Council before advertising, recruiting, and enrollment may take place. The institution shall provide, on Council forms, the location of the activity, its educational purpose, the programs offered, the number of students involved, and any additional information ACICS may request.

Any institution which (1) is under review by the Financial Review Committee of ACICS, (2) shows either a net loss or a negative net worth on its most recent financial report, (3) is required to report placement and/or retention data to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, or (4) is under a deferral action by the Council must request and receive prior permission from ACICS for the initiation of any nonmain campus activity. An institution under a show-cause directive, a negative action, or in a probation status will not receive approval for the initiation of any nonmain campus activity while the action is in effect.

**2-2-102. *Evaluation of Nonmain Campus Activity.*** All activity for which approval is sought will be evaluated by ACICS before approval is granted. Following is a description of those evaluations.

(a) *Branch Campus.* Initial inclusion of a branch within the scope of the accreditation of the main campus may be granted by the Executive Director upon receipt of all required information. The Council must be notified prior to the initiation of a new branch. An institution proposing the initiation of a new branch must submit Part One of the Branch Campus Application and accompanying exhibits. A new branch must be approved and Part One of the Branch Campus Application processed by the Council before an institution advertises, recruits, or enrolls students at the proposed branch. The Council reserves the right to require a preliminary visit to any potential branch campus location prior to the granting of initial inclusion.

A branch campus that is granted initial inclusion by the Executive Director will be required to undergo a verification visit within six months after the initial class start date. Following this visit, the Council may require the institution to submit additional information to satisfy areas of concern identified during the evaluation.

A decision regarding the final inclusion of a branch campus will be made by the Council in full session following a visit by an evaluation team. Prior to the final inclusion visit, the chief on-site administrator of the branch will be required to attend an Accreditation Workshop and to submit Part Two of the Branch Campus Application. The evaluation will normally be scheduled for twelve to eighteen months after the initial class start date and will be conducted by a team of evaluators determined by the size of the institution, the type and number of programs being offered, and other special circumstances. Identification of significant deficiencies during the verification or final inclusion visits can result in an immediate show-cause directive to the main campus.

Only after a determination of acceptability, either at the initial or final inclusion level, and notification to the institution of the decision, may the institution consider a branch campus to be included within the scope of the institution's grant of accreditation. If approval is withheld, the withholding may be treated as a deferral or a denial, based on circumstances, and the institution may exercise its due process rights as outlined in Title II, Chapter 3.

(b) *Learning Site.* The Executive Director is authorized to evaluate and approve learning site activities. Learning site activities of an accredited institution are eligible to be evaluated for inclusion within the scope of the accreditation of the parent institution provided that the learning site activity has been established to meet a specific educational need or condition and is authorized by the appropriate governmental education authority, if applicable.

An institution proposing the initiation of a learning site must submit a Learning Site Application. The institution must

assure the Council that the learning site activities complement the overall objectives of the institution. Based on its review of the application materials, ACICS may (1) grant final inclusion of the learning site or (2) deny the application.

A learning site that is granted final inclusion by the Executive Director will be required to undergo a verification visit within six months after the initial class start date if 50% or more of a program will be offered at the site. Following this visit, the Council may require the institution to submit additional information to satisfy areas of concern identified during the evaluation.

All learning site locations of an institution are evaluated during an institution's regular evaluation for a new grant of accreditation.

**2-2-103. Substantial Change to Nonmain Campus.** Prior notification to ACICS is required when an institution decides to make substantial changes to the operation of a nonmain campus. Notice shall be made in writing to the Executive Director, who is authorized to act on behalf of ACICS in approving such changes.

Failure to notify and receive approval prior to substantial change of activity may call into question the accreditation of the institution, and further evaluation may be required.

## 2-2-200– REDESIGNATION OF CAMPUSES

**2-2-201. Branch-to-Freestanding Applications.** A branch campus is eligible for evaluation as a freestanding, separately accredited institution only if it has been operating as an approved branch campus for at least two years. Branch campuses seeking freestanding status must submit an Application for Accreditation, audited financial statements certified by an independent certified public accountant for the institution's most recent fiscal year, and undergo an on-site evaluation

visit. The visit will not occur until audited financial statements are received.

**2-2-201. Reassignment classification of campuses.** Institutions seeking to reassign the classification of a campus must submit a written request that includes the rationale to the Council. If the grant expiration date of a reassigned branch campus and their new main campus are different, the campus's new expiration date will be assigned based on the original expiration date of the new main campus. However, the Council reserves the right to assign an on-site evaluation visit at either the main or branch campus at any time as it deems necessary.

## 2-2-300–CLOSING OF A CAMPUS

In all instances of termination of activity at either main or nonmain campuses, ACICS must be assured that provision is made for presently enrolled students to complete the program of instruction for which they have enrolled, either at that institution or at another acceptable institution. In addition, ACICS must be assured that student academic transcripts are safely stored and protected and that the transcripts will be accessible to students and alumni indefinitely. ACICS and the appropriate regulatory agency must be notified of the arrangements made in this regard.

**2-2-301. Closing of a Main Campus.** An institution is required to notify ACICS as far in advance as possible when it plans to cease operation. It must complete the appropriate forms describing its plans for teaching out its students and for storing and servicing its records and other information necessary for effecting the cessation of operations as smoothly as possible. The institution's grant of accreditation will be revoked as of the effective date of closing.

When ACICS receives information from any source that an institution has ceased to operate, it shall immediately take steps to verify the information. If the Council believes that the institution, in fact, has ceased operations, the grant of accreditation is summarily suspended. Such action is authorized without prior notice or hearing and with immediate public notice.

The institution shall be notified of the summary suspension in writing at its address of record. Within 10 days after receipt of the suspension notice, the institution may petition ACICS for an expedited determination of whether such suspension should be withdrawn. If no petition is filed within 10 days, the suspension automatically shall become a revocation effective as of the date of notice of suspension.

**2-2-302. Closing of a Nonmain Campus.** An institution is required to notify ACICS as far in advance as possible when it plans to close a nonmain campus. It must complete the appropriate forms describing its plans for teaching out its students and for storing and servicing its records and other information necessary for effecting the cessation of operations as smoothly as possible. The nonmain campus will cease to be included in the institution's grant of accreditation as of the effective date of the closing.

**2-2-303. Teach-out.** The Council may direct a currently accredited institutions to provide a school closure plan or a formal teach-out agreement in response to adverse information, high cohort default rate(s), low retention and/or placement rate(s), financial instability, or other concerns that may call into question the institution's ability to continue to serve the educational needs and objectives of its students or to continue as an on-going concern. If an institution closes or announces its intent to close, the Council will work to the extent feasible with the U.S. Department of Education and the appropriate state regulatory agencies to ensure that students are given reasonable opportunities to complete their education without additional charge. An institution that closes without completing its contractual training obligations to students must refund all unearned revenue.

Should an institution enter into a teach-out agreement with another accredited institution, the signed agreement must be submitted to and approved by the Council prior to implementation. In addition to general information on the institutions entering into the teach-out agreement, the agreement must demonstrate that:

- (a) students will be provided, without additional charge, all of the instruction promised but not yet provided by the closing institution; and
- (b) the teach-out institution is geographically proximate to the closing institution or otherwise can provide students with reasonable access to its programs and services, and that it has the necessary experience, resources, and support services to provide an educational program that is of acceptable quality and is reasonably similar in content, structure, and scheduling to that provided by the closing institution.

## **2-2-400– OWNERSHIP OR CONTROL**

The Council at all times must know who is in control of an accredited institution. The transfer of ownership or a change in the control of an institution is a substantial change that must be reported to the Council. In addition, any institution or owning corporation that is contemplating a transaction that may result in a change of ownership or control must notify the Council at least 15 days prior to consummating the proposed change. Failure to provide this notification in a timely manner may result in a delay processing the application. Transactions that constitute a change of ownership or control vary depending on the structure of the entity that owns or controls the institution.

Accredited institutions are owned or controlled by one of several types of corporations, by a limited partnership with a corporate general partner, or by a limited liability company, each of which is defined in the following subsections. In cases where the entity that directly owns or controls the institution is a subsidiary of another entity, the Council requires information on and monitors the ownership of the controlling entity, the parent entity, and any entities in the chain between those two.

- (a) *Privately held corporation.* A privately held corporation is one that operates for

profit in which one or more stockholders own the voting stock of the corporation. The stock is marketable, but a majority of the voting stock is not traded on public markets overseen by governmental agencies such as the Securities and Exchange Commission in the United States. The control of a privately held corporation is vested in those in control of a majority of the voting stock of the corporation.

- (b) *Publicly traded corporation.* A publicly traded corporation is one that operates for profit in which a majority of the voting stock is traded on public markets overseen by governmental agencies such as the Securities and Exchange Commission in the United States. The control of a publicly traded corporation is vested in the voting members of the board of directors of the corporation.
- (c) *Not-for-profit corporation.* A not-for-profit corporation is one that has been determined by a governmental agency to be tax exempt for reasons the same as or similar to those set forth in Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States. The control of a not-for-profit corporation is vested in the voting members of the board of directors of the corporation.
- (d) *Limited partnership with corporate general partner.* A limited partnership is one that is organized in accordance with the partnership laws of its home jurisdiction. The control of the limited partnership is vested in the general partner, which must be a corporation as defined in subsection (a), (b), or (c) above.
- (e) *Limited liability company.* A limited liability company is one that has been granted a certificate of approval under the laws of the state corporation office or other appropriate regulatory body in its home jurisdiction. A limited liability

company may or may not issue certificates of ownership. The control of a limited liability company is vested in the members, whose ownership interests are defined in the limited liability company operating agreement or other such governing document, who are in control of a majority of the direct or beneficial ownership interest in the company.

**2-2-401. Change of Ownership or control.** A change of ownership or control generally means that a transaction has occurred whereby a new person, combination of persons, or entity can exercise control of a corporation or limited liability company as described in Section 2-2-400. The following subsections outline the typical changes of ownership or control of the three types of corporations that own accredited institutions, including corporate general partners in limited partnerships, and limited liability companies. Transactions other than those outlined below, however, may constitute a change of ownership or control, and the Council reserves the right in its discretion to make the determination of whether a change of ownership or control has occurred in all cases. Institutions, therefore, must keep the Council informed of all substantive changes in the ownership of stock and the composition of the board of directors.

In addition to the transactions outlined below, any change from one type of entity to another as defined in Section 2-2-400 constitutes a change of ownership or control. Institutions also are reminded that nonmain campuses cannot be bought or sold independently of their main campus.

- (a) *Privately held corporation.* A change of ownership or control of a privately held corporation occurs as a result of any of the following transactions:
  - (i) the transfer of 50% or more of the total outstanding voting stock from one party or parties to another party or parties;

- (ii) a transfer of voting stock that results in the ownership of 50% or more of the total outstanding voting stock by any party other than any previous owner of 50% or more of the total outstanding voting stock;
- (iii) a transfer of voting stock whereby a stockholder's ownership of outstanding voting stock decreases from more than 50% to 50% or less, or from 50% to less than 50%; or
- (iv) any other transaction whereby a stockholder or group of stockholders who previously could not exercise control of the corporation as described in Section 2-2-400(a) now can exercise control.

(b) *Publicly traded corporation.* A change of ownership or control of a publicly traded corporation occurs as a result of any of the following transactions or events:

- (i) the change of 50% or more of the voting members of the board of directors in any rolling, 12-month period;
- (ii) a change in the number of voting members of the board of directors in any rolling, 12-month period that will allow a group of directors to exercise control who could not exercise control before the change;
- (iii) the acquisition of outstanding voting shares by any entity whereby that entity owns 50% or more of the total outstanding voting shares; or
- (iv) any other transaction that is deemed by an appropriate governmental agency to constitute a change of control, including but not limited to a transaction that requires the corporation to file Form 8-K with the Securities and Exchange Commission of the United States.

(c) *Not-for-profit corporation.* A change of control of a not-for-profit corporation occurs as a result of any of the following occurrences:

- (i) the change of 50% or more of the voting members of the board of directors in any rolling, 12-month period; or
- (ii) a change in the number of voting members of the board of directors in any rolling, 12-month period that will allow a group of directors to exercise control who could not exercise control before the change.

(d) *Limited partnership with corporate general partner.* A change of ownership or control of a limited partnership with a corporate general partner occurs when the corporate general partner has undergone a change of ownership or control as defined in subsection (a), (b), or (c) above.

(e) *Limited liability company.* A change of ownership or control of a limited liability company occurs as a result of any of the following transactions:

- (i) the transfer of 50% or more of the direct or beneficial ownership interest from one member or members to another member or members;
- (ii) a transfer of direct or beneficial ownership interest that results in the holding of 50% or more of the total direct or beneficial

ownership interest by any member other than any previous member who owned 50% or more of the total direct or beneficial ownership interest;

- (iii) a transfer of direct or beneficial ownership interest whereby a member's direct or beneficial ownership interest decreases from more than 50% to 50% or less, or from 50% to less than 50%; or
- (iv) any other transaction whereby a member or group of members who previously could not exercise control of the company as described in Section 2-2-400(e) now can exercise control.

A change of ownership or control also occurs when ownership or control of the primary assets of an institution or the authority to operate an institution is transferred from the controlling corporation, limited partnership, or limited liability company to another corporation, limited partnership, or limited liability company. A change of ownership or control, however, has not occurred when there is a transfer of assets among wholly owned subsidiary corporations or between a wholly owned subsidiary corporation and its parent corporation; a transfer of assets from a subsidiary corporation to its parent corporation where the parent corporation owns a majority of the outstanding stock of the subsidiary corporation; or a transfer of assets among subsidiary corporations where the common parent owns a majority of the outstanding stock of the subsidiary corporations.

The Council, for purposes of determining ownership or control, views married couples as a single entity, and it views closely related family groups as a single entity in most cases where all of the present and future relevant stockholders actively participate in the management of the corporation. No change of ownership occurs when stock is transferred to a close family

member by operation of law or inheritance upon the death of one of the stockholders.

**2-2-402. Contingent Sales.** The Council will not grant reinstatement of accreditation after a change of ownership or control if the sale of the stock or assets triggering the change of ownership is contingent on approval of the transaction by the Council. If the transaction is rescinded as a result of a condition subsequent to the change of ownership or control of an institution, then the previous owner must apply to the Council for reinstatement.

**2-2-403. Change of Ownership or Control Review Procedures.** The following procedures govern the Council's review of changes of ownership or control:

- (a) *Automatic Discontinuation.* Any change of ownership or control results in the immediate and automatic discontinuation of an institution's grant of accreditation. The grant of accreditation may be reinstated only upon application to and approval by the Council. Because the discontinuation results without action or prior approval on the part of the Council, this change in status does not constitute withdrawal of accreditation and is not a negative action.
- (b) *Reinstatement.* After the grant of accreditation has been discontinued, it may be reinstated at the discretion of the Council at such time and according to terms and conditions that it has established or may establish in the future. Those terms and conditions are set forth in policy statements issued to the field and in the change of ownership application document that institutions must file to initiate the reinstatement process. When the Council is not in session, the Financial Review Committee is authorized to grant a temporary reinstatement of the grant of accreditation for a period sufficient to permit the Council to review and

consider the application and all required supporting documentation.

The Council will conduct a site visit at any institution that has undergone a change of ownership or control within six months of the effective date of the change. The Council will not consider the final reinstatement of an institution's grant of accreditation until this visit has been conducted. In addition, the Council may require the new owner(s) or the chief on-site administrator to attend an Accreditation Workshop before the final reinstatement of an institution's grant of accreditation will be considered.

- (c) *Effect.* Until either temporary or final reinstatement of the grant of accreditation is granted, the accreditation of the institution remains in abeyance. If approval of the application for reinstatement is withheld, the matter will be treated procedurally as a deferral or denial, as the case may be. (See Title II, Chapter 3, Council Actions, for further information.)

## **2-2-500—PROGRAMS OF STUDY**

**2-2-501. Initiation and Evaluation of New Programs.** The Council must be notified prior to the start of all new programs. All new programs and modes of delivery must be initiated within one year of the planned start date. A new program must be approved by the Council before an institution advertises, recruits, or enrolls students in the proposed program. The institution must submit a program outline, course descriptions, an explanation of the mode of educational delivery, and supporting data. Additional information must be submitted on Council forms. The submission of an Annual Institutional Report or catalog identifying a new program does not constitute appropriate notification to the Council. Any institution required to report placement and/or retention data

to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee or financial reports to the Financial Review Committee may be required to obtain prior permission from ACICS for the initiation of any new program. Any institution under a show-cause directive, a negative action, or in a probation status will not receive approval for the initiation of any new programs while the directive is in effect. Any of the following changes to an existing program creates a new program:

- (a) any change of 25% or more in existing contact hours, credit awarded, curriculum content (courses offered), or program length of a currently approved program;
- (b) a change in academic measurement from clock hours to credit hours or vice versa, or a change from quarter to semester credit hours or vice versa; or
- (c) any additions or deletions of courses offered that may change the overall objective of a currently approved program.

For changes in academic measurement described in (b) above, the institution must submit Parts I and II of the New Program Application.

All other substantive changes to programs require the submission of a complete New Program Application. The submission of an Annual Institutional Report or catalog identifying program changes does not constitute appropriate notification to the Council.

An institution proposing new programs must assure ACICS that the programs conform to the stated mission of the institution and its current program offerings. The Council reserves the right when reviewing new programs to review the entire institution.

If a new program complements the general and occupational objectives upon which the institution previously has been evaluated and accredited, and the program is being presented to the public and students as it was presented to ACICS, ordinarily no further evaluation will be required at the time

of approval. However, all program offerings of an institution are appropriately evaluated during an institution's regular evaluation for a new grant of accreditation.

If a new program is determined to be substantially different in course content, general or occupational objective, or in promotional description from other programs offered by the institution, ACICS may direct that a visit be conducted even before granting initial inclusion. If the institution has no prior experience with a particular program, a site visit by a subject specialist and Council staff is required before ACICS will grant final inclusion.

If, as a result of any new program visit, ACICS determines that the overall quality of an institution is being diminished, the institution may be scheduled for a full reevaluation.

**2-2-502. Initiation and Evaluation of New Programs at Higher Credential Levels than Previously Offered.** An institution that intends to offer its first new program at a higher credential than it previously has awarded must submit additional materials and undergo evaluation beyond those procedures outlined in Section 2-2-501 above. In addition to the New Program Application, the institution must submit a detailed transition plan describing how it is or intends to come into compliance with the requirements for this new credential as described in the applicable chapter of Title III of the *Accreditation Criteria*.

The New Program Application and transition plan will be reviewed by the Council. Any institution required to report placement and/or retention data to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee or financial reports to the Financial Review Committee must obtain prior permission from the Council for the initiation of its first new program at a higher credential. If the application and plan are determined to be complete, an institution will be granted approval to advertise, recruit, and enroll for the program(s) and an evaluation visit will be scheduled within six months of the initial start date of the program. The purpose of the evaluation visit will be to assess the institution's initial compliance with the Accreditation Criteria

for the higher credential program, and the appropriate composition of the team will be determined by the Council.

The application and transition plan, the site visit report, and the institution's response to the report will be reviewed by the Council at its next regularly scheduled meeting. If the Council determines that the transition plan is appropriate and that the institution is sufficiently prepared to offer the new credential, it will grant the institution initial inclusion for the new program. The Council will provide the institution in the initial inclusion notice with a timetable for the submission of periodic progress reports and for a follow-up site visit once the program has a sufficient enrollment and/or a sufficient number of graduates.

Final inclusion of the new program will be granted by the Council only after the follow-up visit has been conducted. The institution may request that the follow-up visit take place earlier than scheduled by the Council if it has a sufficient number of graduates who have earned the new credential. The Council retains the right to determine when the follow-up visit will occur. Subsequent new programs at the new credential level will be evaluated by the Council using the new program procedures described in Section 2-2-501 above.

An institution may not submit an application for a new program at a higher credential when approval of final inclusion of a program at a lower credential level is pending.

#### **2-2-503. Changes to Programs.**

(a) *Substantive Changes.* Institutions must apply for approval from ACICS for any of the following changes to a program prior to their implementation or the revised program will be considered an unapproved program. Failure to do so will result in a show-cause action for offering an unapproved program or unapproved mode of delivery. Institutions must submit the appropriate form and supporting documentation for the following:

- (i) the offering of a program at a higher academic credential than currently approved for;
- (ii) any changes of 25% or more in existing contact hours, credit awarded, curriculum content (courses offered), or program length of a currently approved program;
- (iii) a change from clock to credit hours or vice versa, or a change from quarter to semester credit hours or vice versa;
- (iv) a change in the overall objective of the program;
- (v) the initiation of an on-line delivery format for less than 50% of a program of study;
- (vi) the initiation of an on-line delivery format for more than 50% of a program of study.

All changes to programs as indicated above require the submission and approval of a New Program Application Form. Any change as noted in (v) above requires the submission and approval of a Distance Education Activity Application.

For changes as described in (iii) above, the institution must submit only Parts I and II of the New Program Application.

(b) *Non-Substantive Changes.* Institutions must notify, but do not need approval from the Council before implementing the following changes to programs.

- (i) any change of less than 25% in existing contact hours; credit awarded, curriculum content (courses offered), or program length of a currently approved program; or
- (ii) a change in the name of an existing program that does not change the overall objective of the program.

All changes to program as indicated above require official notification be submitted to the Council using the "Non-Substantive Program Modification Form."

The submission of an Annual Institutional Report or catalog identifying program changes does not constitute appropriate notification to the Council.

Furthermore, if cumulative changes to a single program within a twelve-month period equal or exceed 25% of the contact hours, credit hours, curriculum content or program length, a New Program Application form must be submitted (See Section 2-2-503(a)).

**2-2-504. *Termination of Programs.*** A decision by an institution to terminate any program voluntarily must be appropriately communicated to all interested publics. These publics include, but are not limited to, students, governmental agencies, the local community, and ACICS.

New students may not be enrolled in any program which cannot be completed prior to the termination date for which public notice has been given. Moreover, the institution is obligated to continue to offer appropriate courses, including prerequisites, so that currently enrolled students will be able to complete the program and receive the credential which was their designated educational objective. For this purpose, the period of time need not extend beyond sufficient time for students already enrolled and maintaining normal academic progress to complete the program.

To maintain approval, an institution must maintain enrollment in each program of study. If an approved program is inactive for at least three years, the program will be considered discontinued and will be removed from the institution's list of approved programs. To reinstate the program, the institution must submit an ACICS New Program Application.

**2-2-505. *Consortium Agreements.*** A consortium agreement permits an institution to arrange for a portion of its approved program to be delivered

by another accredited institution in the consortium. Consortium agreements must be in writing and must be disclosed in the catalog. Institutions are advised that specific state and federal regulations may apply.

- (a) The entire consortium agreement must be submitted to and approved by the Council prior to the institution's participation in the consortium. The institution seeking approval of such an agreement must submit documentation that demonstrates that the other members of the consortium that will deliver instruction hold institutional accreditation from an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and that the portion of the program to be delivered by any other institution have been approved by that institution's accrediting agency.
- (b) The consortium agreement must identify how the curriculum and instruction will be monitored, how curriculum revisions will be undertaken, and how student grievances will be addressed. The institution seeking approval of a consortium agreement must acknowledge in writing that it retains ultimate responsibility for the delivery of its programs and the satisfaction of its students.
- (c) At least 25% of the program must be delivered by the institution that awards the academic credential.

**2-2-506. Contracts with Unaccredited Institutions or Entities.** An institution may enter into a contract with an unaccredited institution or entity for the delivery of up to 25% of a program of study.

The institution must submit the contract and provide the following information to ACICS for review and approval prior to the initiation of the contract:

- (a) a full catalog description of the program and the services to be provided by the contractor;
- (b) a systematic plan for administrative and student evaluations of instructors provided by the contractor;
- (c) evidence of the qualifications of faculty to teach the contracted courses;
- (d) a description of the instructional facilities provided by the contractor; and
- (e) plans for the completion of the program should the contractor fail to provide contracted services.

**2-2-507. Articulation Agreements with Secondary Schools.** An institution may enter into an articulation agreement with a secondary school to transfer credit for courses taken at the secondary level that are equal to courses offered in a postsecondary institution. Articulation agreements must be in writing, periodically reviewed, signed, and dated. The institution must maintain a file consisting of the following: (1) a Letter of Intent to Articulate signed by both institutions specifying the numbers and titles of courses to be articulated, (2) a written description of the standards for acceptable transfer of credit, and (3) a comparison of the course objectives of the secondary and postsecondary courses(s) with signed approvals of both institutions. These credits appear on both the secondary and postsecondary transcripts.

**2-2-508. International Partnership Agreements.**

An ACICS-accredited institution may enter into an international partnership agreement with an institution of higher education in a geographic location other than that of the United States or its territories. At least 25% of the program must be delivered by the institution that awards the academic credential.

The ACICS-accredited institution must submit an international partnership agreement to the Council and provide the following information to ACICS

for review and approval prior to the initiation of the partnership agreement:

- (a) evidence provided by the institution or agency that the international partner and the programs to be delivered are recognized by an educational approval agency equivalent to an accrediting agency recognized by the US Department of Education;
- (b) a full catalog description of the program and the services to be provided through the partnership agreement;
- (c) a plan which describes recruitment, admission, standards of satisfactory academic progress;
- (d) a plan which describes student financial relations, including tuition and fees, and refund policies;
- (e) a description of the program(s) of study or courses offered;
- (f) a systematic plan for administration and student evaluations of instructors provided by in the partnership agreement;
- (g) evidence of the qualifications of faculty to teach;
- (h) a description of the instructional facilities at the international site;
- (i) a plan for the completion of the program(s) should the international partner fail to provide agreed upon services;
- (j) a plan for the safety and security of students, faculty, and staff.
- (k) specify which programs or portions are to be delivered via distance education and how the institutions will monitor growth.

**2-2-601. Change of Name.** The Council must be notified and grant approval when an institution decides to change its name. Forms are supplied for the institution to explain and justify the change. The Executive Director has the authority to review and approve a change in name. The following limitations apply:

- (a) “junior college” may be used only by those institutions that offer at least an academic associate’s degree;
- (b) “senior college” may be used only by those institutions that offer at least a bachelor’s degree; and
- (c) “university” may be used only by those institutions that offer a master’s degree.

These limitations are effective for all Change of Name applications received after January 1, 1997. All institutional names approved prior to that date may be retained.

**2-2-602. Change of Location.** The Council must be notified and grant approval when an institution decides to change its physical location or its address and prior to the initiation of classes at any new location. Forms are supplied for the institution to explain and justify the change. The Executive Director has the authority to review and approve a change of location. In addition, the Executive Director may require an on-site evaluation visit as part of its review in order to determine compliance with Council standards.

## 2-2-600—OTHER CHANGES



## **TITLE II**

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### **Chapter 3 COUNCIL ACTIONS**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

When the Council has considered all of the information and reports submitted as a result of the accrediting process, it will make a judgment as to an institution's compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*. The Council's decision is based on the extent of an institution's compliance. The judgment made is referred to as a "Council action." The actions which the Council may take are described in this chapter. Procedures available to institutions to challenge those actions also are explained. There are four general areas of Council actions: accreditation granted, accreditation deferred, accreditation denied, and accreditation withdrawn.

If the Council believes that an institution is not in compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*, it will take prompt adverse action against the institution, or it will require the institution to take appropriate action to bring itself into compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria* within a time frame specified by the Council after the institution has been notified that it is not in compliance. That time frame will not exceed the following:

- (a) twelve months, if the longest program is less than one year in length;
- (b) eighteen months, if the longest program is at least one year, but less than two years in length; and
- (c) two years, if the longest program is at least two years in length.

The above time frames may be extended at the sole discretion of the Council for good cause, including evidence that there has been significant

improvement in the deficient area(s) and the applicable time frame does not provide sufficient time to demonstrate full compliance, e.g., significant improvement in completion or placement rates.

#### **2-3-100—ACCREDITATION GRANTED**

If an institution is found to be in compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*, ACICS may grant accreditation for a specific period of time from a minimum of one year to a maximum of eight years. The length of the grant shall be at the discretion of ACICS. A grant of accreditation for less than eight years is not a negative action and, therefore, is not appealable.

Institutions on an eight-year grant of accreditation are required to submit an Interim Report for Eight-Year Grants as specified under Section 2-1-804 – Interim Report for Eight-Year Grants.

The Council will not grant accreditation for a full eight-year term if the grant is awarded following any hearing resulting from a previous action to deny accreditation.

**2-3-101. Admonition.** The Council may judge an institution to be generally in compliance with the criteria, but it also may wish to call the institution's attention to one or more deficiencies that are not serious enough to preclude a grant of accreditation but that nonetheless must be corrected. In these cases, the institution will be awarded a grant of accreditation but will be admonished to correct the deficiencies. An admonition is an instruction to an institution either to initiate some prescribed practice or to refrain from some proscribed activity. An